U.S. Appln. No. 09/641,449   IBM Docket No. GB9-2000-0034US1
Amendment Dated Sep. 16, 2004
Reply to Office Action of June 7, 2004
Docket No. 6169-179

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of June 7, 2004 (Office Action). This response is being filed with a petition for a one month retroactive extension of time with the appropriate fee.

As an initial matter, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for his thorough examination of the application. Claim 6 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's instruction so as to overcome the objection to the claim set forth in paragraph 2 of the Office Action.

A brief review of the Applicants' invention may be helpful prior to addressing the Examiner's rejection. Applicants' invention provides an interactive voice response (IVR) system that includes a plurality of speech technology modules, each of which can be suited for a particular interaction environment property, such as the locale of a caller or the language spoken by the caller. Based upon the environment property of an interaction with a caller, a speech technology selection module can select speech technology modules from the plurality of modules to be used by the application. As such, the present invention can select a speech technology module that is particularly suited to the interaction with the caller.

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, Claims 1 through 6 are rejected under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112 as containing subject matter not described in the specification. The Examiner, more particularly, states that the specification fails to support the recitation in independent Claim 1 directed to a speech technology modules comprising both a speech recognition engine and a text-to-speech engine. In response, Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the present invention. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's asserted basis for the rejection is rendered moot by the amendment of Claim 1 as set forth herein. Accordingly, Applicants have chosen not to address the merits of the rejection in this response.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the present invention. Claim 1, as amended, recites a plurality of speech technology modules, at least one of which includes a speech recognition engine (SRE) for recognizing speech input for a user and at least one other of which includes a text-to-speech engine (TTSE). As explained in the following, the amended claim is fully supported in the specification and does not introduce new matter.

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As the Examiner correctly points out in paragraph four of the Office Action, the specification at pages 5 through 6, for example, explicitly describes Figure 1 as including speech technology modules, which, in turn, are described as serving different functions including speech recognition and text-to-speech conversion. Elsewhere, such as at page 7 of the specification, the selection of speech technology recited in independent Claim 1 is expressly described as including requesting instantiation of the speech recognition or text-to-speech.

The specification thus supports the recited features of a plurality of speech technology modules, a voice application defining a plurality of interactions between a caller and the speech technology modules wherein each interaction has a task property and an interaction environment property, and a speech technology selection module for selecting a speech technology module to be used by the application according to the environment property of the interaction. It follows accordingly that because, as described in the specification, one or both of recognizing speech and/or converting text to speech may be required, the plurality of modules must accommodate both. Therefore, the specification fully supports independent Claim 1, as amended, including the recitation directed to an IVR having at least one of module comprising a speech recognition engine for recognizing speech input and at least one other module comprising a text-to-speech engine.

The Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _9/16/04_

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